

Medicine Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations





*This goose,
designed by J.N.
“Ding” Darling, is
the symbol of the
National Wildlife
Refuge System.*

Welcome to Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), located in northeastern Montana. Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Medicine Lake NWR is one of over 565 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside to conserve wildlife and habitat for people today and for generations to come.

General Information

Refuge headquarters is open 7:00 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The Refuge is open sunrise to sunset. Please note that the Wildlife Drive is closed during the State waterfowl season and during inclement weather.

The 31,000-acre Refuge offers many recreational opportunities. Visitors are encouraged to enjoy wildlife observation and photography, hiking, bicycling, hunting, and fishing. If an activity is not listed below, it is not allowed.

Medicine Lake, islands east of the Highway 16 Bridge, and the Sandhills are designated wilderness areas. Although the islands are closed to public access, you are welcome to visit the Sandhills part of the wilderness area. Please remember that no mechanical or motorized equipment, or horses, are permitted within the designated wilderness area.

Protecting the Refuge

For the protection of wildlife, habitat and other visitors, please observe the following regulations.

- Vehicle traffic is restricted to gravel roads, parking areas, and trails marked for vehicle travel. Driving off-road is prohibited.
- Vehicles must be parked at designated parking areas, road approaches, or on the road shoulder far enough to prevent traffic obstruction.
- Mountain biking is permitted only on designated roads and trails.
- Overnight camping, overnight parking, wood cutting, and wood gathering are prohibited.
- Open fires are not allowed, but gas and charcoal grills are permitted in designated parking areas.
- Disturbing, injuring, or removing plants, animals, natural objects, or artifacts is prohibited.
- Pets must be confined or leashed, and their waste must be properly disposed of in a trash can.
- Swimming in Refuge waters is prohibited.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuges must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with Refuge regulations (50CFR 27.42 and 50 CFR Part 32).

Boating

Non-motorized boating on Medicine Lake is a fun way to experience this unique and beautiful area. We remind you to follow all State boating laws. Motorboats and sailboats are not allowed on the Refuge.

Fishing

Fishing is allowed year-round on Medicine Lake and in Areas 1 and 2 (see map).

- All State of Montana fishing and bait regulations apply.
- Please observe signs and Refuge map indicating areas closed to bank fishing, including all islands.
- Ice fishing shelters must be removed by March 1st.
- Fish remains must be removed from the Refuge.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted on the Refuge in accordance with all State of Montana hunting regulations.

- Hunters may enter a hunting area one hour before legal shooting time and must exit by one hour after legal shooting time.
- The use of non-toxic shot is required. Possession or use of lead shot is illegal on the Refuge.
- The use of dogs is encouraged while hunting game birds.
- Blinds, tree stands, decoys, and other personal property must be removed daily.

Prohibited Hunting-Related Activities

- Possession/consumption of alcohol while hunting
- Littering, including leaving spent shotgun shells or remains of hunted animals
- Shooting into or retrieval of game from areas closed to hunting
- The use of mechanical or motorized equipment, including game carts and spinning wing decoys within the Wilderness Area
- Hunting dog trials
- Use of electronic game calls
- Commercial guiding and outfitting
- Shooting from, on, or across roads and road right-of-way
- The hunting of any species not listed below

Upland Game Birds (Pheasant, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Gray Partridge)

- Upland game birds may be hunted in Area 2 of the Refuge in accordance with State seasons and bag limits.
- A late season hunt for upland game birds in Areas 1 and 3 begins on November 15 and continues through the regular State seasons.

Migratory Birds (Duck, Goose, Coot, Snipe, Sandhill Crane, Tundra Swan, Mourning Dove)

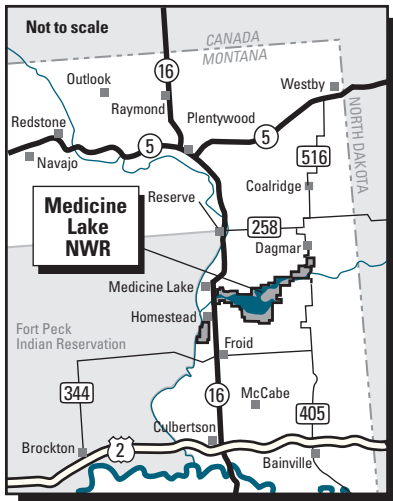
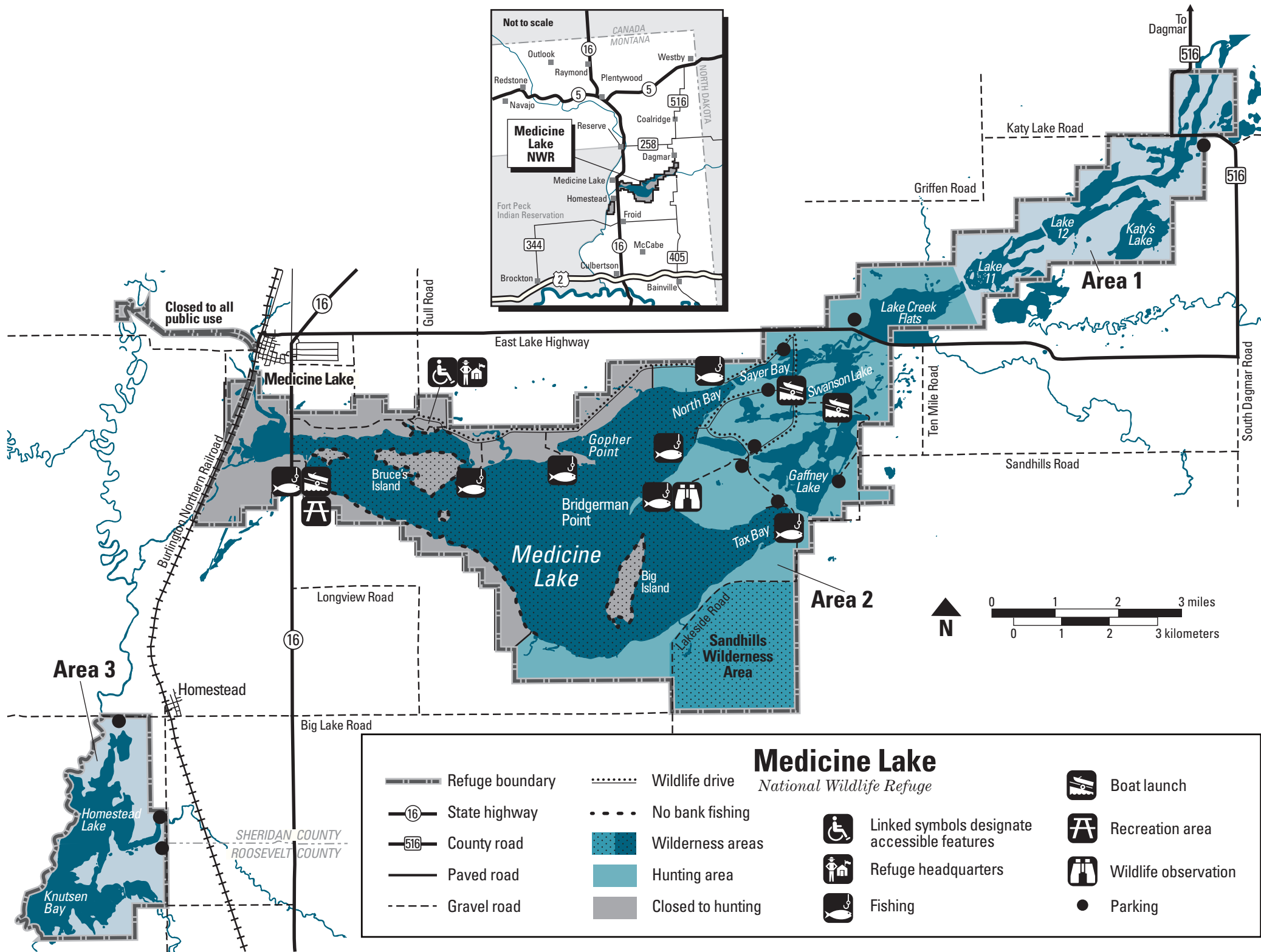
- Migratory bird hunting is not allowed in Areas 1 and 3.
- Migratory birds may be hunted in Area 2 of the Refuge in accordance with State seasons and bag limits.
- Refuge waters in Area 2 are open to non-mechanical boats (canoes, kayaks, and rowboats) used for hunting.
- Accessible hunting blinds are available for reservation. Check with Refuge staff for additional information on accessible hunting opportunities.

Big Game (White-tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Antelope)

- Big game may be hunted in Area 2 of the Refuge in accordance with State seasons and bag limits.
- A late season hunt for big game in Areas 1 and 3 begins on November 15 and continues through the regular State seasons.

Accessibility Information

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 711 for a free connection to the state transfer relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from people with hearing and speech disabilities. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 406 / 789 2305, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



Medicine Lake

National Wildlife Refuge

- Refuge boundary
- State highway
- County road
- Paved road
- Gravel road

- Wildlife drive
- No bank fishing
- Wilderness areas
- Hunting area
- Closed to hunting

- Linked symbols designate accessible features
- Refuge headquarters
- Fishing

- Boat launch
- Recreation area
- Wildlife observation
- Parking

Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge
223 North Shore Road
Medicine Lake, MT 59247
406 / 789 2305
406 / 789 2350 fax
medicinelake@fws.gov
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/medicine_lake

For State transfer relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

For Refuge Information
1 800 / 344 WILD

August 2019

